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THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Youth Night '04 set July 23 in Jackson

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

The 2004 edition of Mississippi Baptist Youth Night — the largest annual gathering of Mississippi Baptists anywhere in the state — will kick off at 6:30 p.m. on July 23 in the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson, according to the chairman of the planning committee.

"Admission is free but as usual, we're expecting an overflow crowd so we're encouraging churches to get their young folks into the Coliseum as early as possible if they want good seats — or seats at all," said Don Lum, the planning committee chairman whose main job is serving as a consultant in the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Sunday School Department.

"The doors will open at 5:30 p.m., with pre-session activities beginning at 6:30 p.m. Worship will start promptly at 7 p.m. Counselor training will begin at 6:25 p.m. at the west end of the Coliseum," Lum said.

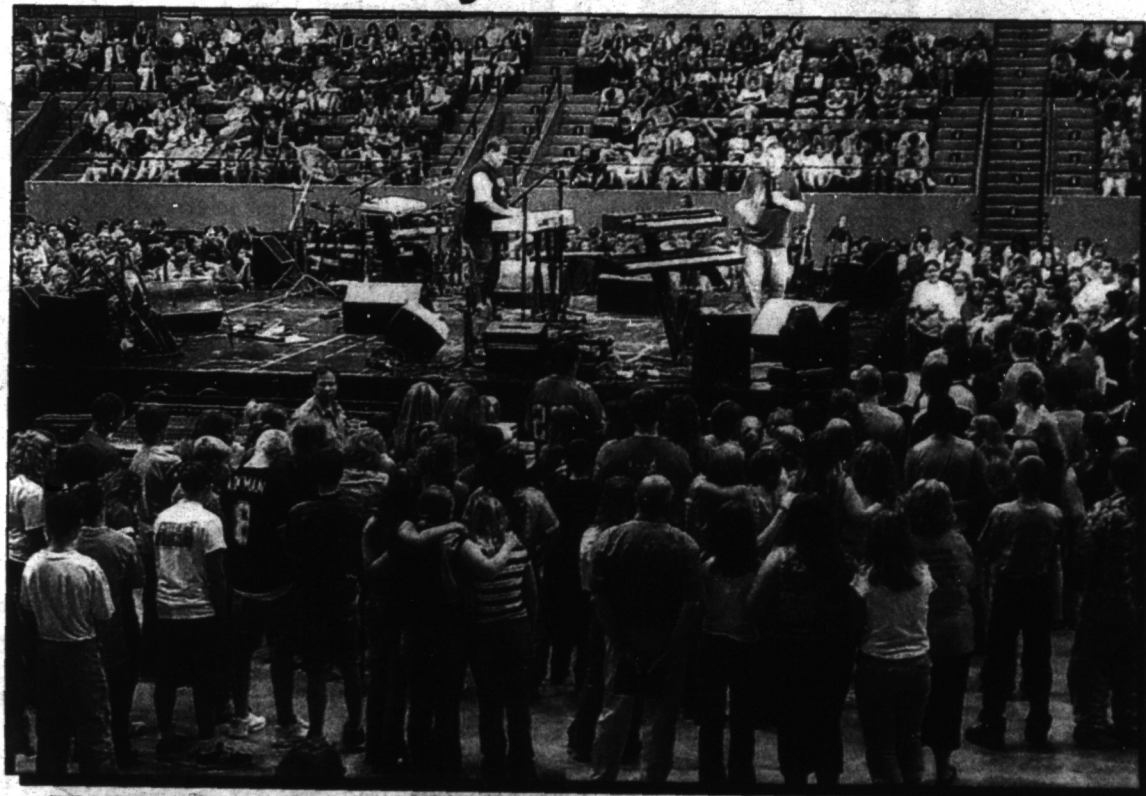
The speaker for 2004 Youth Night is Al Meredith, pastor since 1987 of Wedgwood Church in Fort Worth. Worship leaders will be Jake Gullledge and the worship band from Chestnut Mountain Church in Gainesville, Ga.

During a See You At the Pole rally at Meredith's church on September 15, 1999, a deranged gunman entered the church and fired more than 100 rounds from various firearms into the crowd of 400 young worshippers and their adult leaders. A total of seven people were killed and 14 people were injured before the gunman took his own life in the

balcony of the church's sanctuary.

"This tragedy of course had a tremendous impact on the church, and it has reinforced how Dr. Meredith sees God in the midst of difficult and painful times. I know the people who attend Youth Night will be blessed by Dr. Meredith's words," Lum said.

Feedback from people who saw Jake Gullledge's performance at last year's event led the 2004 planning committee to invite him back for a second time, Lum said. "There was a wonderful response last year to Jake's spirit. He led us to the throne of God in such a meaningful way; it was the right thing to invite him back this year."



DECISIONS FOR CHRIST — Scores of young people and their leaders gather around the stage during the invitation time at the 2003 Mississippi Baptist Youth Night in the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson. Don Lum, event coordinator and chairman of the planning committee, reported that more than 200 decisions for Christ were recorded. (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Gullledge is accompanied during his musical performances by a special worship band from his home church in Georgia. "The band is composed of people who have full-time jobs in other fields, who travel with Jake to his performances purely out of their love for God and for Christian music," Lum said.

Several related events in the Jackson area are available after Youth Night adjourns:

- The Baptist Healthplex on the campus of Mississippi College in Clinton will open its doors to Youth Night participants from 10 p.m.-1 a.m. on July 23 for recreational activities including a 32-foot climbing wall, two indoor heated pools, whirlpools, steam rooms, and dry saunas, along with basketball, racquetball, squash, and volleyball courts.

Cost is \$10 per person, and reservations must be made by July 19 by calling (601) 925-7900. Participation is limited to 150 people, so early reservations are recommended. Web site: http://www.mbmcc.org/med_serv/wellness/healthplex.htm#clinton.

- Paradise Lanes at 820 Cooper Road in Jackson will offer a special church promotion group rate of \$9 per person

for two hours of bowling (shoes included) during regular hours of 10 a.m.-1 a.m. on July 23-24. An after-hours lock-in rate is also available.

Reservations can be made or more information obtained by calling (601) 372-7700. Paradise Lanes is a smoke-free and alcohol-free facility.

- Rapids Water Park on the Ross Barnett

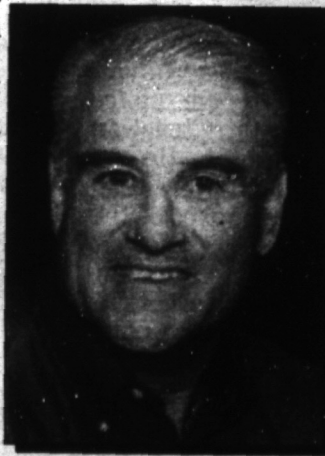
Reservoir outside Jackson will hold Baptist Youth Day from 10 a.m.-8 p.m. on July 24. Attractions include Mississippi's biggest wave pool, speed slides, enclosed tube slides, and the park's new Raging Rapids slide.

Cost is \$11.99 per person, with a 15-

person group minimum. Reservations are required and must be made at least a day in advance by calling (601) 992-0500. Web site: www.rapidswaterpark.net.

A list of hotels and motels is available by calling Joy Ellis at (601) 292-3292 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 948-1651, ext. 292. E-mail: jellis@mbcb.org.

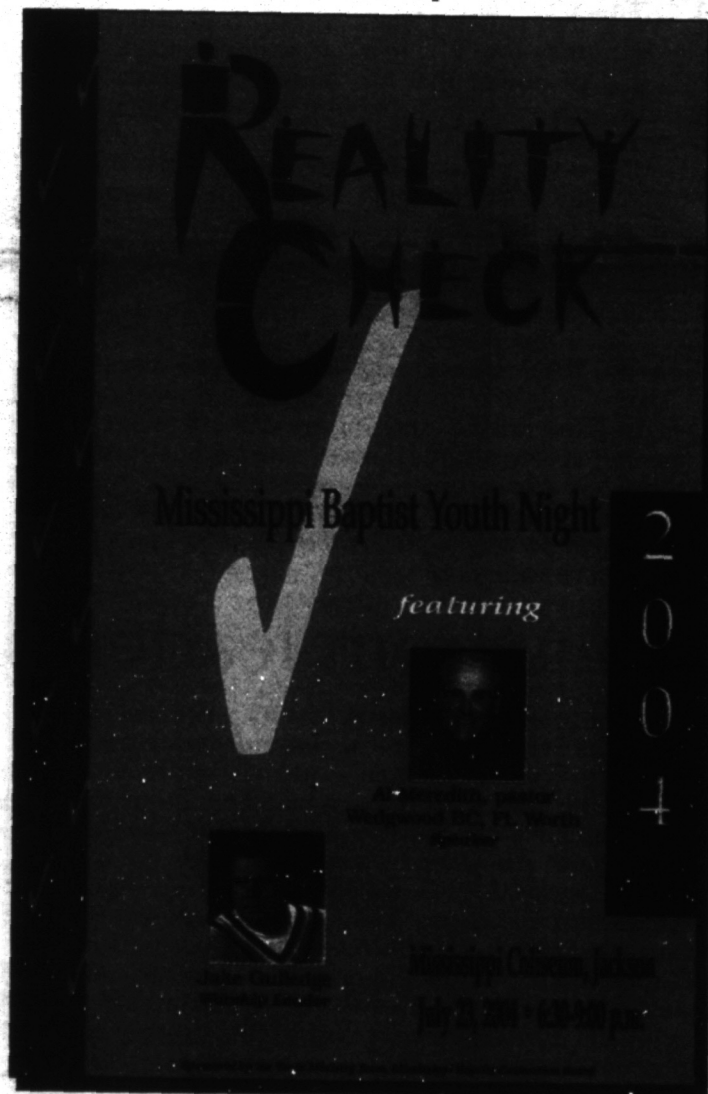
For more information on the 2004 Mississippi Baptist Youth Night, contact Lum at (601) 292-3280 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 280. E-mail: dlum@mbcb.org.



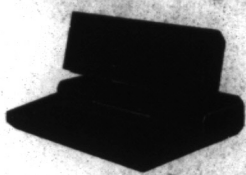
Meredith



Gullledge



GUEST OPINION



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The water is heating up

One way to boil a frog is to put it in a kettle with lukewarm water and slowly turn up the heat. The frog doesn't really sense the changing temperature and before the frog knows it's too late, well, it's too late. I'm afraid the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) resembles the frog a bit too much these days, and it's time for us to realize the water is heating up.

I introduced two concerns I have about the future of our denomination in addressing the SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis in mid-June. My first concern stems from the decrease in baptisms as reported for the fourth consecutive year in the Annual Church Profile.

It reflects a denomination that's lost its focus on evangelism. It is hard for someone to argue to the contrary when more than 10,000 Southern Baptist churches did not baptize a single person last year. Although we've seen tremendous strides in overseas baptisms, we are not keeping up with the population growth at home or around the world.

I fear there is a lack of urgency in our churches to baptize. I've heard from a number of people across our denomination that professions of faith are good enough.

They are not teaching the importance of publicly identifying with Jesus through baptism — and they're ignoring His command to baptize His followers.

As part of our LifeWay Christian Resources presentation to the convention, we included "man on the street" interviews and asked people to respond to such questions as, "What is sin?" "Do you believe that the Bible is accurate?" and "Where do you go when you die?" Some of the answers were a bit humorous like the gentleman who replied that "strong alcohol" was a sin.

Beyond the humor, however, the answers revealed a demographically diverse sampling of how spiritually lost people are. They see the Bible as a book of "fairy tales" and "folklore" handed down from previous generations. They are clueless that they are on the fast track to eternal separation from God.

Who's going to share the hope of Jesus with them? These people and the mil-



lions like them are our responsibility. Perhaps the main reason for the decline in baptisms is that our denomination is simply failing to reach people for Christ.

The second concern I addressed is a lack of denominational involvement and loyalty I see among younger ministers.

Some of us older folks need to 'fess up that the fault for this lies with us. We have failed the younger generation by not creating a dynamic atmosphere and showing them the relevancy of being Southern Baptist. We've not taught people in our churches how the SBC and its entities work and relate to one another.

We battle today over trivial issues like forms of worship, styles of leadership, and approaches to ministry. These younger folks may not do it the way you or I do it, but who said our way is the only way?

Younger leaders are asking, "Is there a place for me at the table in the SBC?" That question hits me right in the gut. How do we answer them? There needs to be a greater connection between them and those of us in positions of leadership — from the associational level to the state conventions and on to the SBC. We'd better address the

question, or the 50-something leaders will be turning out the denominational lights when their ministries draw to a close.

The struggle over the last 25 years within the Southern Baptist Convention was for scriptural fidelity — and we won. Let's do something with the victory. Unfortunately there is a mindset that the younger ministers weren't there during the struggle, so they don't have a part in the concentration of power that has emerged. I think many associate being young with theological liberalism. That's simply not true. All younger ministers are asking for is a voice to help determine the future direction of the SBC. They love our heritage and want the responsibility of being its caretaker.

We have a choice: selfishly hoard the power and see our denomination die within the next 20 years, or transfer leadership, theology, and passion to future generations.

Is the Southern Baptist Convention the frog in the kettle? Time will tell — but if we cook, we have no one to blame but ourselves.

Draper is president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, based in Nashville.

Draper commentary stirs reactions from leaders

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP and local reports) — Within 12 hours of posting the commentary published in the space above, LifeWay Christian Resources President Jimmy Draper had received more than 100 e-mail responses, the majority from younger pastors.

"We are committed to the Bible, evangelism and missions but we see most of the convention as out of touch and irrelevant," one such pastor wrote, before also noting, "I believe there is a movement underway among young pastors in the convention to build the Kingdom through the local church."

Another younger pastor, who recounted that he holds a key leadership position in his state convention as well as one in his local association, nevertheless stated, "I have grown to view the denomination as largely irrelevant. Most of my members did not grow up Southern Baptist. They are

prime examples of the lack of denominational loyalty which is more and more prevalent in our culture. They are looking for a church that is biblical, relevant and life-changing.... I strongly disagree with the political nature of all that is the SBC. I just don't have time for it. There is too much to be done.... I think we have lost our focus!"

"I am thankful that you have addressed the problem of where the convention is headed," another wrote. "... [T]here is a problem and it isn't simple, as far as I know it isn't 'coordinated,'" he observed before noting: "and it isn't a huge topic among most of the people that I know." The pastor added that further discussion is needed along with the development of a strategy to address SBC baptisms and involvement of young leaders.

State convention leaders, asked for their observations by Baptist Press, affirmed Draper's initiative.

B. Carlisle Driggers, executive director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention and co-chairman of the SBC's Empowering Kingdom Growth Task Force, said Draper "has earned the right as a Baptist leader to make the observations he does in the article. He is so respected and appreciated by Southern Baptists all over the country. His comments are candid and very much to the point about the current situation within the entire Southern Baptist Convention."

"We are at a time when we are losing ground in reaching people for Christ, baptizing new believers into our churches and incorporating younger pastors and church members into the work of our denomination," Driggers said. "I believe most deeply that if Southern Baptists could gain a true Kingdom perspective as envisioned by Jesus in the New Testament, we would see all

phases of our work and ministry increase dramatically and consistently. I appreciate so much what Dr. Draper has written and I hope our people will take it to heart. We intend to do so in South Carolina."

J. Robert White, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention who noted, "Some of our brightest minds and most committed leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention are to be found among our younger leadership. I have been impressed by their zeal and uninhibited devotion to preaching and sharing the Gospel to whomever, wherever, and whenever God leads. [The SBC at present is] so blessed with capable leadership that we could overlook a generation waiting in the wings, a generation of leaders who may weary of waiting and express their leadership in ways outside traditional Southern Baptist means."

So. Baptists responding to Sudan crisis

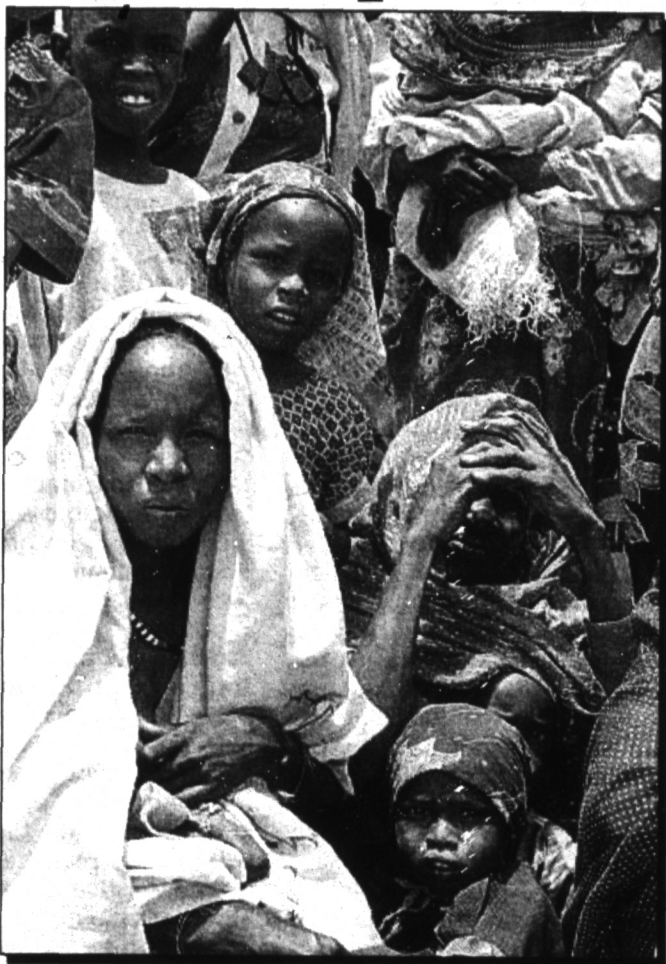
KHARTOUM, Sudan (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptist relief funds are helping hungry and thirsty refugees in the midst of what the United Nations is calling the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

More than one million people are homeless and as many as 30,000 dead in western Sudan's Darfur province as Arab militias drive black Africans from their land. Arab "Janjaweed" militias have burned thousands of homes and used systematic rape to terrorize black African villagers into leaving the area. The Sudanese military has provided air cover and other support for the militias.

Radical Islamists from the Muslim north of the country have for many years sought to exterminate Sudanese Christians in the southern portion of the country. Verified reports of genocide, systematic rape, crop destruction, aid diversion, and enslavement of Christians have been circulating in the western world for at least a decade.

As with the current situation in Darfur, the Sudanese government has consistently turned a blind eye to the suffering of innocent civilians, and even given open military support to the Arab militias committing the atrocities.

The situation has grown so dire that U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and United



SEEKING REFUGE — Thousands of Sudanese, mostly women and children, have fled their country's civil war and religious conflicts to live in refugee camps along the border with Chad. In Sudan's Darfur province, marauding Arab militias are attempting to drive black Africans from their land. (BP photo by Eskinder Debebe/United Nations)

Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan both visited Sudan during the same week in early July. They pressured the government to stop the genocide and prevent starvation and disease on a massive scale.

Food and water are scarce, and the recent onset of the rainy season could unleash a malaria epidemic in crowded refugee camps, a humanitarian worker told Baptist Press.

As many as 350,000 people could die of disease or malnutrition this year in what the United Nations has identified as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

An initial emergency grant of \$5,000 from the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund purchased food and grain for refugee camps, according to hunger and relief consultant Jim Brown.

Another \$100,000 will be needed to get clean drinking water into the camps, and long-term plans call for helping repair and dig wells in the area.

QUESTIONING ISLAM

While Sudan has been notorious for a two-decade civil war between Muslims in the north and Christians and animists in the south, this conflict involves Muslim-on-Muslim oppression, the humanitarian worker said.

"My friends from Darfur say all the villages have been destroyed, but other humanitarian workers say the destruction is not so complete," the worker told Baptist Press. "Of course, neither group has seen more than a small part of the country because access is limited by the government and the militias."

"It has shocked them that, as Muslims, they are under threat from other Muslims. Now those who have fled are saying, 'I can't pray anymore. Why should I remain a Muslim? Muslims only hurt my family and take my land.' Their foundation in Islam is beginning to be shaken. They are beginning to really question their Islamic faith."

CALL TO PRAYER

While financial contributions are needed for the relief effort, Southern Baptists with a heart for Darfur ask for concerted prayer on a number of fronts:

- "Please pray that relief agencies can have access and freedom to do their work," the worker said. "The rainy season started in June, and that makes everything 10 times worse. Many refugees literally are living under bushes. Pray that shelter can be secured, disease is held at bay, food and water can be distributed."

- "Pray that next year's crop can somehow be planted. This is the time for planting crops, but it is unsafe for people to do so. If they do not return home now to plant their crops, they will miss an entire cycle of harvest, resulting in widespread hunger in the months ahead."

- "Pray that these people will cry out to the One True God — and that they will know miraculous response to their cries, whether in dreams and visions or in physical

relief. Pray that they will continue to question and seek truth in their hearts. Pray that they will be faced with their own sin and their need for forgiveness in Christ. Pray that believers will have opportunities to share spiritual relief, as well as physical."

- "Pray for Christians living in southern Sudan who have experienced hard things at the hands of northern Muslims. It is very easy for them to be apathetic toward the plight of the refugees. If Muslims who are experiencing theft and death at the hands of their Muslim neighbors experience grace and mercy in the form of food, shelter and compassion from Christians, it could be very powerful. Pray for Southerners to be forgiving after experiencing so much hurt."

Contributions for hunger and relief ministries in Sudan may be sent to: Sudan — General Relief, International Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

Looking back

10 years ago

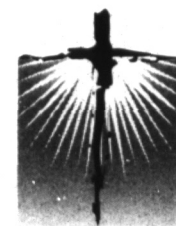
Mississippi becomes the first battleground in a national war over student-initiated school prayer when opponents file suit in federal court in Jackson seeking to strike down the state's new law approving such prayers.

20 years ago

First Church, Greenville, celebrates the 50th anniversary of its Chinese mission with a display of historical memorabilia and an afternoon service conducted in the Chinese language by Peter Chen of the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board.

50 years ago

Gillsburg Church, Osyka, wins first place in the state in the Church Progress Chart program in 1954. The recognition came because of progress in every phase of church life. The award was \$50 worth of books for their church library.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

The Baptist
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WCC enjoys
summer roll
expansion

Summer enrollment is up by 209 students at William Carey College (WCC) in comparison with a year ago, for a total of 2,153 students. Of that number, 1036 students are enrolled in graduate classes on WCC campuses in Hattiesburg, Gulfport, and New Orleans.

The education department on the Hattiesburg campus has the largest number of enrolled students with 598 undergraduates and graduates. The Fails School of Nursing saw an increase in summer enrollment from 83 in 2003 to 119 in 2004. Enrollment is also up for the summer in the school of business and the psychology department.

Remaining orientation and registration dates for the fall trimester for freshmen and transfer students are July 26 and August 13. For more information, call WCC admissions at (601) 318-6103 or toll-free (800) 962-5991, ext. 103. Website: www.wmcarey.edu.

Coverage planned

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Coverage of the Republican and Democratic conventions later this summer will be aired on FamilyNet, the broadcast subsidiary of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. FamilyNet's Decision 2004 — Boston during the July 27-29 Democratic convention will be aired live from 8-9 p.m. Central time as will Decision 2004 — New York in the same time slot during the Aug. 31-Sept. 2 Republican convention. The nightly programs will include live reports from the convention and in-studio features and panel segments moderated by news anchor John Criswell, featuring such guests as Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and host of the weekly Richard Land Live! syndicated radio broadcast; Janet Parshall, the host of Janet Parshall's America, a three-hour nationally syndicated radio program; Peter Roussel, special assistant and deputy press secretary to President Reagan from 1981-87; and Hugh Hewitt, a Los Angeles-based political commentator and host of the syndicated Hugh Hewitt Show radio program. FamilyNet President Bob Sutton said the coverage will seek to "filter through the rhetoric, by focusing on substantial issues that are relevant to the lives of those we represent," while Vice President of Programming Martin Coleman noted, "We will explore issues like how the candidates' delegates' faith plays into their decisions as well as how a candidate's faith impacts the voters' decisions toward the candidate." Based in Fort Worth, Texas, FamilyNet is a 24-hour television network airing more than 50 hours of original, values-based programs to a potential audience of more than 32 million households. Information about FamilyNet outlets is on the Web at www.FamilyNet.com or available by phoning (800) 832-6638.

Bibliocipher

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XPHM GDQT VHFG

FMXL PQJ, RFX FR

DEDQM XPB GNLCT

QMXL PQG RKDUH: ILC

DKK XPHB XPDX XDWH

XPH GNLCT GPDKK RHC

QGP NQXP XPH GNLCT.

JDXXPHN XNHMB-GQO:
IQXB-XNL

Clue: N = W

Have fun with cryptography
and exercise your Bible
knowledge. A King James
Version Bible verse has been
encoded by letter substitution.
The same letter is substituted
throughout the puzzle. Solve
by trial and error. Answer to
last week's puzzle: Mark 12:40

HURT PRIDE

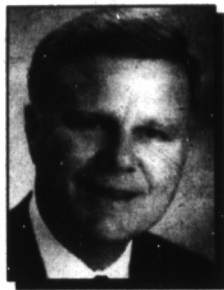
The wise man who wrote the Proverbs said that "Pride goeth before a fall." God's Word is always right on target and this truth can be seen almost before you get to work each day and maybe can even be experienced in your own life soon after starting the day.

We usually notice pride and the fall that comes in its most beautiful, vivid, neon light kind of colors in somebody else and especially in some high profile, big name, boastful kind of person. Then when the fall comes we quote the verse. Pride rides along in all of our hearts and the fall whether seen by anyone else or not takes place.

On a beautiful Sunday summer morning, I was leaving early to preach at one of our churches. I was not far from home when I saw a cyclist as he started around a curve dressed in his full biking regalia of bright colors and a sharp helmet. It was not raining but there was some moisture on the pavement. As he rounded the corner the bike went out from under him and he and the bicycle went sliding along on the street. I drove over to where he was to see if he was okay. Before I could even get there he was back up with bicycle in hand brushing himself off and straddling the seat to give it another try. I rolled my window down and said, "Is everything okay?" He said, "Yeah, I'm fine. I just hurt my pride." I said, "I understand. I have been there plenty of times." He waved and rode off. I drove off putting my window back up.

Who among us has not been in some place or position thinking we had it all together only to blow it. With the snap of a finger, we felt like Humpty Dumpty. What is it about pride that works in us and seems to always push us to be in a position to fall and fail? For a few moments examine pride with me.

Pride elevates. It seems that pride is the soil out of which our sins seem to grow. Pride always seems to be present to push us not just above our own capabilities, but to push us to think that we are above God. Pride elevates whether it is that picture of Lucifer, son of the morning, who was so elevated in his thinking that he thought he was greater than God, or our first parents, Adam and Eve, who arrived



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

at their own self revelation to think that they did not need to listen to God or pay attention to His Word. In fact, pride will work its terrible destructive powers in everyone — in Abraham, Moses, David, and Simon Peter, in presidents, kings, athletes, and starlets, and in you and me. Pride has accomplished its task once we begin to feel elevated above others in our understanding of ourselves and especially in our desensitized relationship with God. We are in for a fall.

Through many years of preaching two services on Sunday morning, I consistently watched as folks who would be singing would mess up in the second service. At the same time they would consistently do a great job in the first service. They would remember the words, hit all the right notes, and bless everybody immensely. Then, in the second go around it was almost as though they thought, "I have got this down pat. I don't even have to think about it. I did good the first service and I know I will do good this time." Not on every occasion but enough times where I would catch myself watching for it, they would mess up, forget the words, miss a cue, or forget the song all together in the second service. It is not that they wanted to mess up and it is not that they were bad people. It is just that pride has a way of reaching down inside of us to elevate us beyond what we ought to be. Now please understand that while I could see that in others I am sure there are folks if they heard me two or three times in succession would say the same thing is true in my case.

Pride separates. It is amazing how wide a gap a little pride can create. Just a "dab" of pride can wreck a loving relationship. Just a "pinch" of pride can separate good friends. Just a "small measurement" of pride pushes nations away from each other. I recall a

friend who had dropped out of church and would not go back because of her embarrassment and hurt pride. You see, one day after the service she slipped down and broke her hip as she came out of the church. There was good reason to slip down and it had nothing to do with age, strength, gender, or walking ability. It had everything to do with the ice that was on the sidewalk. There she was leaving church, crumpled on the sidewalk, and waiting on the paramedics. Months and months later she was still too embarrassed to go back. You may think, "Well, that is such a small thing. There must be something else at work in that situation." Maybe, but it just takes a small "smidgen" of pride to separate.

Pride dominates. To me this may be the most remarkable aspect about pride. While these other facets are true, the way in which pride dominates is amazing. Once pride has been injected into our systems and brought about some painful fall, it takes over. I have watched people live a lifetime with the pain and constant pulsating poison of their own pride. We just will not let it go. We hang on, hold on, and allow pride to infest and interject its thought process into every aspect of our living. That is precisely why one of the key aspects of the Gospel is so revolutionary, so vital, and so life-changing. Forgiveness lets go, forgiveness releases, and forgiveness allows you to release and not be controlled or dominated by the virus of pride.

When we become Christians we are forgiven by God. Then because we live in the wonderful example of our Savior, Jesus, we are forgiving toward others and even toward ourselves. What a glorious thing happens in our lives when sin is no longer first place and pride no longer dominates everything about us. We are able to live, move on, and get up off of the pavement where we were dumped and move ahead. May God help you today to set aside your pride, realize how much you are loved, experience His total forgiveness, and ride on surrounded by His enormous grace.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jffutral@mbcb.org.

Mississippi's BSUs top convention statistics

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

While Mississippi often struggles in secular national surveys, the state's Baptists shine in many of the areas that really count. A prime example — in a recent per capita study, the Mississippi Baptist Student Union (BSU) program led the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in many key indicators:

- The number of BSU summer missionaries commissioned each year.
- The amount of money raised to send those summer missionaries (who along with their local BSUs are responsible for raising the funds to go).
- The dollars given to all missions causes through BSUs.
- The number of students involved in BSU programs on the campuses of Mississippi's community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities.
- The total number of students reached with the Gospel through BSU members.

In 2003, Mississippi BSU summer missions resulted in 3,131

reported conversions out of 3,994 total decisions. During the past 10 years, Mississippi BSU has sent 1,181 summer missionaries — 53% more than the previous 10-year period. During the 57 year history of sending summer missionaries, BSU programs have sent 2,690 missionaries around the world, raising a total of \$2,780,328 to support them.

What accounts for this success? "Mississippi BSU has had a long tradition for strong mission support. The churches are committed to what we do as Mississippi Baptists. Students have heard a lot about our mission work before they even get to campus," said Weaver McCracken, associate director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Collegiate Ministry Department.

Mississippi Baptists have a BSU presence on 32 Mississippi campuses. The BSUs provide a witness on the campuses; places for spiritual nurture and growth, and the development of future Baptist leaders; and encouragement for major missions involvement.

"We have a strong BSU director base," McCracken said. "There's a commitment to cover all the campuses in the state and invest in the future. We want to invest not only in the missions area, but in leadership development."

Mississippi BSUs are jointly funded by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board through the Cooperative Program, and local associations and churches surrounding the individual BSUs.

While the ministry of summer missions is a seasonal event, work continues year round. "It actually begins when the students come back from the summer before," said McCracken.

"The returning students share testimonies and photos at the fall conference. That way, freshmen students hear of their experiences right away. Summer missions are promoted all during the fall on the campuses. There is a lot of local emphasis in October, and by Thanksgiving students begin the application process

for summer missions. In January, we conduct interviews, and they are commissioned in April."

While the summer missionaries leave Mississippi with clear directions and ministry assignments, they can't be rigid. "They have to be flexible," McCracken stated. "A student needs to understand that this opportunity is a great one if they sense they're called."

With volatile events taking place in many areas of the world, many people might think all the violence would have a negative effect on prospective summer missionaries. "World conditions don't seem to have any impact on overseas assignments," McCracken said. "The trust of the local churches sending kids has undergirded all we do."

For more information on BSU programs in Mississippi, contact McCracken at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3302 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 302. E-mail: wmcckracken@mbcb.org.

State park enjoys unique worship service

By Chris Burrows
Correspondent

The view from the back pew is impressive. Pine trees are gently swaying in the breeze. If you listen closely, you can hear fish popping the lake's surface while preacher Charles Wooten tells the congregation, "The grace of Jesus is sufficient to meet any need you might have."

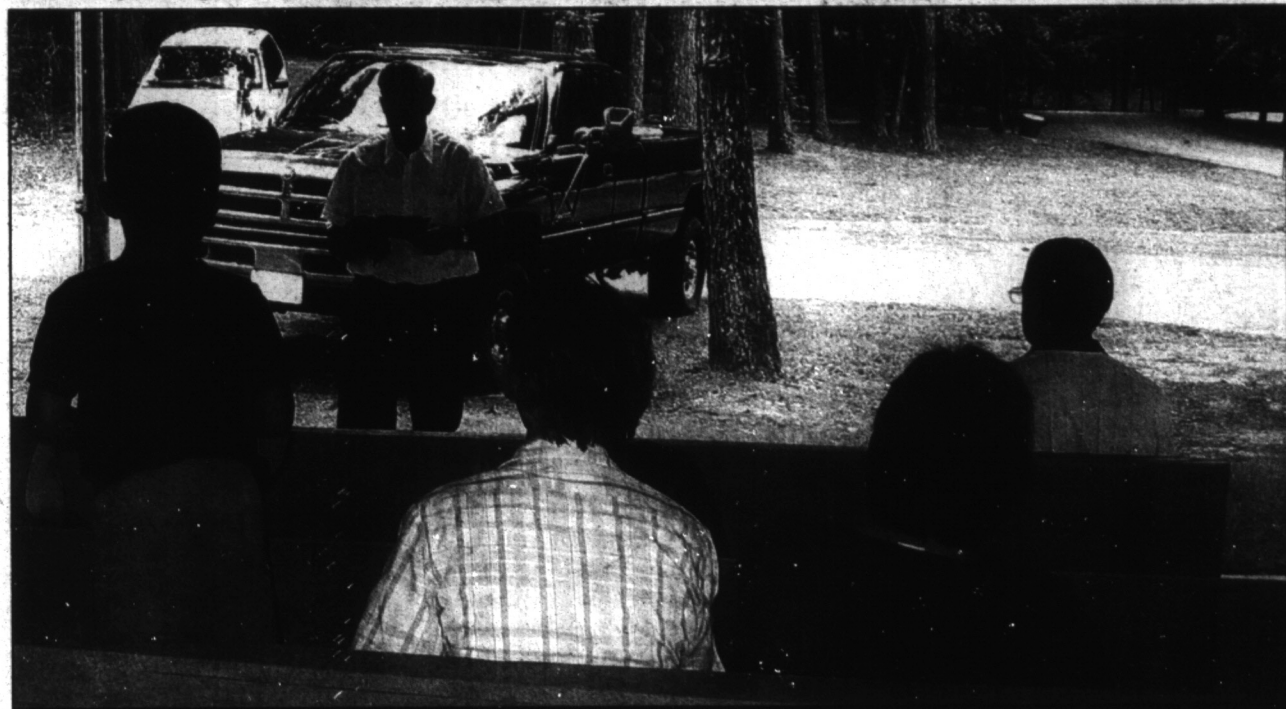
It's a typical Sunday morning worship service. That is, it's a typical Sunday morning worship service in the Tishomingo State Park near Tishomingo.

A congregation of eight — on some Sundays as many as 50 and some Sundays as few as two — has gathered at the Bobby Cobb Pavilion. On this Sunday, the worshipers include mostly Southern Baptists from Wisconsin, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Wooten leads the opening prayer, preaches from 2 Kings about the cleansing of Naaman, and offers an invitation for salvation and service before closing with the benediction.

"It's typical Sunday morning service, except for the church building," said Wooten, staying around to spend time with the attendees before attending his own traditional services at Tishomingo Church. "We'll get people to come here that have told me they've never been to any church before."

The Pavilion, which was provided by a \$2,000 gift from Mississippi Baptists through the Margaret Lackey State



OPEN AIR WORSHIP — Bobby Wooten preaches at a recent worship service under the Bobby Cobb Pavilion at Tishomingo State Park near Tishomingo. "It's typical Sunday morning service, except for the church building," said Wooten. (BR photo by Chris Burrows)

Mission Offering and the sweat work of Tishomingo Association men, provides a wonderful setting for worship. The view of the park lake is beautiful, the breeze and shade are almost always present while the pavilion can weather most any storm.

Bobby Cobb, the Tishomingo Associational Mission Director, Park Ranger Bill Bracken, and Wooten were instrumental in making the vision a reality. Tishomingo Association had a 30-year history of providing worship opportunities in the park on a regular or semi-regular basis, but a lack of a permanent facility often hampered efforts.

"If it was overcast or rainy, we would have to move to a different area of the park and it was difficult to get visitors to follow you," Cobb said. "With a permanent location and this pavilion, it makes a big difference in reaching people."

"We all worked with the Mississippi Baptist Convention to try to make this thing happen and this is a case of what can be done when everybody cooperates. It could not have been done any other way."

The pavilion construction should be suitable for services for the next 50 years. A permanent sign along the main road circling the lake is easily

visible and reminds guests of the Sunday morning worship opportunity.

Wooten added, "We've had people from all over the country attend these services and you never know who will be touched by Jesus. He's here with us every Sunday."

For more information, contact the Church Planting Department at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3361 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 361. E-mail: edeuschle@mbcb.org.

Burrows is Baptist Student Union Director at Itawamba Community College in Fulton.

Itawamba church seeking community impact

By Chris Burrows
Correspondent

The challenge is clearly and easily seen. Calvary Church — the newest church plant in Itawamba County — sits on a scenic bluff just a handful of stone throws from the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway.

Inside the 10,000-square foot facility are the signs of promise. Rolls of insulation are lying over by a ladder. Temporary walls are stacked close to the metal frames that will provide educational space. Concrete floors are swept clean, ready for the day when carpet and flooring will be in place.

Outside the facility are also signs of promise. There is no Southern Baptist church for eight miles due north and five miles to the northeast. The church is adjacent to two of Itawamba County's most famous landmarks: Itawamba Community College and the Jamie Whitten Center, which overlooks the Tenn-Tom Waterway and is named for the late Mississippi Congressman.

"If anybody is looking for opportunity or a challenge to do something in the name of Jesus — here it is," Pastor Roger Kennedy said. "I'm grateful this church family sees it and we're grateful the Mississippi Baptists see it, too."

Mississippi Baptists, through the Church Planting Department of the

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, have provided \$12,000 through the Mississippi Cooperative Program to Calvary Church in an effort to speed the process of the church building and growth. Kennedy, along with co-chairpersons Diamond King and Gail Umphers, helped generate the action.

Calvary Church began in May 2002 with a core group of 35 members. In two years, the church has secured prime real estate, grown to 90 members, and has a budget of \$70,000. The church has stable leadership, along with an enthusiastic and friendly spirit.

Howard Curbow, Itawamba Associational Missions Director, has overseen two church plants during his tenure and believes Calvary Church has huge potential. "They've got a great location, good people that want to do the work of the Lord, and a base facility is in place."

Combined with the demographic opportunities, the members of Calvary Church find themselves in position to make a strong impact in a county that is not a denominational stronghold — a rarity in Northeast Mississippi, where Southern Baptists are the dominant Protestant faith.

The financial gift from Mississippi Baptists will help in two aspects, according to Kennedy. "Not only will it help us financially, but from a time standpoint,

this gift will help us complete our building goals by six to nine months, minimum."

Umphers, whose background was not Southern Baptist, has been impressed by the work of her chosen denomination. "We've had encouragement and support throughout this process. I can honestly say to anyone that I'm grateful for our denomination."

"I'm not only thankful for the financial gift but I'm thankful for the prayers of Mississippi Baptists and Southern Baptists everywhere. Please make sure they know that."

For more information, contact the Church Planting Department at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3361 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 361. E-mail: edeuschle@mbcb.org.

Burrows is Baptist Student Union Director at Itawamba Community College in Fulton.



Arts Fest set for July 18-21 at New Zion

The first-ever Mississippi Christian Arts Festival will be held July 18-21 at New Zion Church in Weir. Sponsored by the church and Art On Mission, the festival will be a family friendly celebration of Jesus Christ through the arts featuring Mississippi artists working in various art forms.

The festival will begin with a worship service on July 18, beginning at 11 a.m. The message is entitled "Christianity and the Arts." At 3 p.m. on July 18, an invitational art show will open with refreshments and a narrated tour of the show. At 6 p.m., a slide show entitled "Visual Life of Christ" will feature fine art masterpieces from the Middle Ages through the 20th century. During the slide show, Sunny the Clown will entertain and make a child in the room a "clown" for the day.

Festival programs begin nightly at 7 p.m. on July 19-21. In addition, an art show will be open from 6-9 p.m. with refreshments after each program. The July 19 program will feature drama with puppets and people for kids and adults. The July 20 program is a music night featuring original music performed by Christian singer-songwriters Samuel Cole, Kristin McArthur, and an art project, which will be a devotion entitled "Head of Christ," a sculptural presentation, on the evening of July 21.

For more information, contact New Zion Church Pastor Bob Mamrock at (662) 285-3633. E-mail: churcharts@excite.com.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Gaston Church Groundbreaking, Prentiss Association



Holly Church Mothers, Corinth



Hebron Church Bible Drill Participants, Jones County



Holly Church 2004 High School Graduates, Corinth

Children from Bethsaida Church, Philadelphia, recently participated in Church, Associational, and State Bible Drills. Pictured (kneeling) are Reagan Pierce, (standing from left) Krissy Winstead, Jenny White, leader, Savonna Mikell, leader, and Ellen James.

The youth of Holly Church, Corinth, held an Easter dramatization. Pictured are the youth in preparation.

Holly Church, Corinth, honored mothers during the Mother's Day Service recently. Pictured are Karen Morrow, Lora Ann Huff, Crystal Garcia, Ada Lee Jones, Annie Cummings, and Karen Hodum.

The high school graduates of Holly Church, Corinth, were honored recently. Pictured (from left) are Daniel Hinton, Devin Lee, Laney Hopper, Raquel Morgan, and John Richards.

Youth of Hebron Church, Jones County, recently participated in Bible Drills. Pictured (from left, front) are Kristie Reddoch, Dell Ainsworth, Kent Graves, Jennifer Ainsworth, (back) leaders Bill and Janice Reddoch. All four advanced to state level and received superior ratings.

Gaston Church, Prentiss Association, held a groundbreaking June 13 for their new worship center. Pictured (from left) are building committee members Ben S. Parman, Hal Brumfield, pas-

tor, Barry Cox, Robin Griffith, Darryl Hatfield, Gary Johnson, Danny Murphy, Paul Goldman, Betty Brewer, David Moore, Joe Tanner, and Lisa Holley.



Bethsaida Church Bible Drill Participants, Philadelphia



Holly Church Youth, Corinth

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



Lee County Ministry Assistants

Pictured is Herbert Langston giving New Hope Church, Webster County, the deed to his home to be used as a pastorium. Langston and his wife had decided to do this before she recently passed away. Pictured are Langston and Bernette Fielder, pastor, receiving the deed on behalf of the church.

The Hispanic church, Iglesia Maravilloso Salvador, Cleveland, is conducting day camps this summer. One was held June 9 with seven children participating. They were treated to lunch and ice cream. They played and watched a Bible story video.

Twenty ministry assistants from nine Lee County

Churches came together April 29 at Harrisburg Church, Tupelo, for a fellowship. Patsy Sheffield was the guest speaker and Marc Howard, Missions Director, served as the waiter.

Mantee Church, Mantee, recently held VBS. Pictured is the kindergarten group.



Hamilton Church Deacon Ordination, Benton County

and (back) Mitchell Aucoin. Suzanne Cutrer is the leader and Milton Kliesch is pastor.

Hamilton Church, Benton County, ordained Donnie Schuman to the ministry May 25. Ken White, pastor of Beulah Church, Union County, delivered the charge to the church and Marvin Cox, Director of Missions, Union County, delivered the charge to the minister. Pictured (from left) are White, Schuman, Earl Wilbanks, and Cox.



Iglesia Maravilloso Salvador Camp Participants, Cleveland



Langston and Fielder, pastor



Osyka Church RAs, Oskya



Mantee Church Kindergarten VBS Participants, Mantee

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

The Missions teams of Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg, recently participated in The Fourth of July Soldier Appreciation Care Package Day. Each child wrote a letter to be given in a decorated brown bag with personal travel items. CPT.



Boys Missions Team of Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg



Girls Missions Team of Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg

Bret J. Gilmore, a graduate of William Carey College and now serving in Iraq, headed this drive. His goal is to give 1,000 soldiers serving in the danger zone a brown bag with items from home on the July 4. John Cockrell is pastor. Pictured are girls and boys participating with their leaders.

Chris Mowdy was recently ordained as a deacon of Bethsaida Church, Philadelphia. David Hardy gave the charge to the church and Billy James, pastor, gave the charge to Mowdy. Pictured (from left) are Mowdy, Renee Mowdy, and James.

Bobby Everett McGuffie, 15, was licensed to the ministry at Mt. Moriah Church, Bogue Chitto, March 28. He is available to speak at youth events and revivals. Pictured (from left) are Danny Moss, pastor, and McGuffie. Also taking part were Talmadge Smith, Director of Missions, Lincoln Association,

Tim Porch, Glen Crane, pastor of Ruth Church, Ruth, and Wanza McGuffie, pianist.



Moss, pastor and McGuffie

the check from Minister of Music Doug Spires, was Christelle Thames from the Baptist Children's Village.

In a boys vs. girls missions offering contest, the VBS attendants of Briar Hill Church, Florence, raised \$1,036 for The Baptist Children's Village.

Accepting the check from Minister of Music Doug Spires, was Christelle Thames from the Baptist Children's Village.

COLLEGE NEWS

William Carey College, Hattiesburg campus, will hold Fall Orientation July 26 from 8 a.m.-noon. New, returning, and transfer students are invited. Check-in with breakfast begins at 8 a.m. in Thomas Fine Arts Building followed by welcome at 8:30 a.m. in Smith Auditorium. A parent information session begins at 9:15 a.m. in Lucile Parker Gallery. An organization fair and peer-lead group sessions will be from 9:15-10 a.m. Students meet with advisors to register from 10 a.m.-noon. Students interested in attending should call (601) 318-6212. Those choosing to register on the general registration day August 13 should call (601) 318-6103.



Chris and Renee Mowdy and Billy James, pastor

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HOMEcomings & REVIVALS

Bethel, Water Valley: Revival July 18-21; Sunday 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Truman Scarbrough, evangelist; Laramie Minga, worship leader.

First, Lauderdale: Revival July 25-28; 7 p.m. nightly; Don Gann, Jackson, preaching; Ginger Grissom Stevens, Meridian, music; Jerry Bishop, pastor; for more information, call (601) 679-5586.

Holly Springs, Foxworth: Revival July 18-23; Sunday, 11 a.m. and dinner on the grounds; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Michael Grenn, N. Columbia, Columbia, speaker; Brad Day, Agricola, Lucedale, music director; nursery provided; for more information call Kevin Crozier, pastor, at (601) 736-5795 or (601) 736-9548.

Sunrise, Petal: Homecoming and Revival August 1-4; Sunday, 9 a.m., 9:55 a.m., 11 a.m., and dinner on the grounds; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Billy Smith, evangelist; Daniel Lee, music.

New Salem, McCall Creek: Revival July 18-21; 10 a.m., 11 a.m., lunch will follow, and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Philip Hemby, speaker; Delton Holland, music; Wiley Reid, interim pastor.

Concord, Pelahatchie: Revival July 18-21; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:30 p.m.; James E. Smith, First, Collins, evangelist; Larry Beasley, music; Billy McKay, pastor; all are welcome.

Oak Grove, Prentiss: Revival July 18-21; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Steven F. Echols, NOBTS, evangelist; Jimmy Walley, Sandhill, Ellisville, music evangelist; for directions, call (601) 792-4383.

White Oak, Smith County: Revival July 18-23; Sunday, 11 a.m., lunch following, and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Jimmy Porter, MCB, evangelist; Robert Fennell, First, Ellisville, music; Tim Robertson, pastor.

First, Satartia: Homecoming and Revival July 18-21; Sunday, 11 a.m., lunch will be served; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Albert Grey, speaker; Bill and Martha Martin, music; Bobby Anderson, pastor.

Yale Street, Cleveland: 50th Anniversary July 18; 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; Gary Reichenbach, Isola, speaker; Rick Forbus, music; Benny Still, pianist; John Chouccoli, Jr., pastor.

Grace, Calhoun City: 60th Anniversary and Revival July 25-30; Sunday, 10:30 a.m., lunch will follow, and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Edward Pendergrast, evangelist; Carl Morris, pastor; all are welcome.

Lone Star, Collins: Revival July 18-23; Sunday, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri. 7 p.m.; Nathan Barber, evangelist; Madelyn Easterling, music; L.C. Anthony, pastor.

Elon, Macon: Revival August 8-11; 7 p.m. nightly; Charles Dampeer, evangelist; Steve and Becky Carver, music; all are invited to attend.

Carson, Carson: 100th Anniversary September 19; any former members attending should contact Jimmy Sellers, pastor, at (601) 943-6455.

Liberty, Liberty: Revival August 1-4; Sunday, dinner will follow morning worship with afternoon services, 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon, lunch will follow, and 7 p.m.; Billy Thomas, leading worship; "Buddy" McElroy, music.

Calvary, Carroll County: July 25-28; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; dinner will be served nightly at 6 p.m.; Joey

Ingram, music; George Smith, missions director, preaching; for more information, call (662) 237-4145 or (662) 226-7032.

Poplar Springs, Hazlehurst: 100th Celebration July 18; Old Fashion Day; worship, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.; The Hosanna Quartet, Magee, music; all are welcome; for more information, call Herbert Greer, pastor, at (601) 643-2002.

Ebenezer, Lexington: 125th Anniversary July 25; worship, 10 a.m.; dinner at noon; afternoon events, 1 p.m.; Promised, music; Walt Grayson, speaking; for more information, call (662) 834-2486 or (662) 472-9534.

First, Ovett: Centennial Celebration July 30-August 1; Friday, 7 p.m.; Sat., cookout at 5 p.m., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 9:45 a.m., 11 a.m., lunch at noon, and 1:30 p.m.; Hosanna Quartet, music; Tommy Mangum, Terry Booth, preaching; all are invited.

Mt. Moriah, Lincoln County: Revival July 18-21; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; David Sellers, Macedonia, Brookhaven, evangelist; Everette Hedgepeth, music; Danny Moss, pastor; for more information, call (601) 833-8858.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

The Young Continentals will lead worship in the service Airborne!-Reaching for a Higher Purpose August 5 at Liberty Church, Liberty. This is a free concert. A love offering will be taken.

Temple Church, East Campus, Hattiesburg, will hold a conference, Beautiful: An Event for Women, August 7. Featuring Angela Thomas, this event is for girls 13 and older, and women of all ages. Registration begins at 9 a.m. with the program running

9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. For ticket information, call (601) 544-1794 or (601) 450-7831.

Hebron Church, Jones County, will host VBS July 19-23 from 6-8:30 p.m. for kindergarten-grade 6. Supper will be served nightly at 5 p.m.; Kari Davis is the director. Tommy Davis is pastor. All are invited. For more information, call (601) 763-3251.

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OBITUARY

Byron E. Mathis, Long Beach, died June 18, at his home.

Mathis graduated from Beaumont High School, William Carey College, and NOBTS.

He served as pastor of Neely Church, Green County; Prospect Church, Perry County; Seminary Church, Seminary; and Calvary Church, Pascagoula.

As a pastor, Mathis led trips to Israel and served as a Trustee of Lift Bible College, Ocean Springs, where he was awarded

an honorary doctorate. He conducted prison ministries and privately aided transients along the Gulf Coast.

Mathis founded Mathis Publishers, Inc. He published THE WORD: The Bible from 26 Translations.

He served as Honorary Chairman for the Mississippi Delegation of the National Republican Committee's Business Advisory Council.

Survivors include his wife of 57 years, Joyce Moulder Mathis; son, Byron E. "Buddy" Mathis, Jr.; siblings, Mary Sue Powell, Glenn Mathis, Billy Ray Mathis, and Sarah Barber.

Visitation was held at Calvary Church with a victory service following June 21. A second victory service was held at Beaumont Church, Beaumont, the same day.

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FREDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH located 25 miles NW of Tupelo, Miss., in the Ingomar school district is seeking a full-time minister of music/youth director. If interested, please send resume by August 1st, to 1616 CR 86, New Albany, MS 38652. Or fax to (662) 534-3436 or email them to doctorca@datalane.net.

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(I repent.)
 3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
 4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)
- But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).*
- If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.*

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Encouraged by Redemptive Usefulness

Nehemiah 1:2-7, 10-11; 2:4-8, 17-18

By Mo Baker

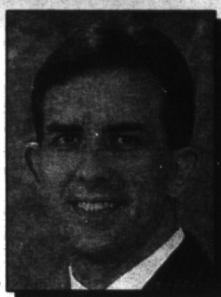
Why do many children have a fascination with trains? Perhaps it has something to do with the novelty of transportation on rails, the large size and diverse types of train cars, or the unique combination of lights and sounds associated with locomotives. My children all love trains, and one of their favorites is a little blue wooden train named Thomas the tank engine, the literary creation of a Rev. W. Awdry of England. Awdry's books place Thomas among many trains of various sizes, shapes, and functions, and the little blue steam engine struggles for identity. His chief desire is to be seen as a really useful engine.

Thomas's struggle for usefulness is one with which humans can readily identify. Psychologists tell us that one of

the main ingredients people need to be truly happy is to have a useful purpose in life. The prophet Nehemiah, writing over 400 years before Christ's birth, wrote about his own burden for being useful in God's service as he wanted to rebuild Jerusalem. We can learn from Nehemiah ways that we, too, can be useful in God's kingdom work.

I. ASSESS THE SITUATION (NE 1:2-3).

Nehemiah exhibited usefulness to God because he possessed a genuine concern for God's people. The historical context is most likely around 445 BC, during the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I, king of Persia. The report given to Nehemiah by his brother, Hanani, was troubling. Whatever rebuilding efforts that had occurred in Jerusalem since



Baker

the Babylonian captivity over a century earlier had been destroyed, causing the Jewish people to be ridden with shame. Nehemiah was interested in the welfare of God's people, as he wanted to know precisely how they were doing in Jerusalem. Useful servants are those who carefully weigh the situations confronting God's people.

II. CONFESS SIN (NE 1:4-7).

Upon evaluating the circumstances, Nehemiah was moved to tears, which led him to prayer. After focusing his prayer on the awesome nature of God, Nehemiah petitioned God to hear his confession of sins, his own transgressions as well as those of his people. Nehemiah's inclusion of his own sins into his confessional prayer was significant, as it identified him with the people he intended to lead. Leaders who acknowledge their own failures more readily identify with those whom they lead.

III. PETITION GOD (NE 1:10-11).

Nehemiah called upon God to

act redemptively toward Judah as He had in Israel's past. Nehemiah's prayer referred to God's act in delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage. The bold request made by Nehemiah in verse 11 indicates that the prophet was ready to approach the king following a season of prayer. He requested that God move King Artaxerxes to act on behalf of God's people, a work that no human could accomplish on his own. Nehemiah understood that prayer precedes action. God's people would do well to practice the same lifestyle.

IV. ENLIST SUPPORT (NE 2:4-8).

Nehemiah walked so closely with God that he was able to pray a quick prayer in the presence of the king then make his request. Because of his constant communion with God, Nehemiah knew exactly what was needed to accomplish his plans. Moreover, Nehemiah believed that God would move the king to grant his request, and Nehemiah was willing to accept whatever the king offered as being provided by God. Useful servants depend upon God to meet their needs,

even when He chooses to do so through other human beings.

V. ENCOURAGE OTHERS (NE 2:17-18).

At just the right time, Nehemiah presented his plan to the people. He used four incentives to motivate them to get involved in the rebuilding project: 1. He identified with the people; 2. He emphasized the seriousness of the situation; 3. He committed himself to taking definitive action; and 4. He gave a personal testimony of God's grace to help convince the people that God would assist them. Useful servants eagerly encourage others by inspiring trust in God and challenging persons to faith and action.

Despite the unfavorable circumstances confronting God's people, one leader, Nehemiah, made a difference in a time of crisis. He was useful to God in numerous ways. By following his example, Christians can also be more useful in serving the Lord. As Thomas the tank engine says, "Little engines can do big things!"

Baker is BSU Director at the University of Mississippi in Oxford.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Go the Distance

2 Kings 13

By Mary Carraway

I am looking forward to the summer Olympics. Hundreds of athletes of many nationalities and abilities will be competing with one common goal: to go the distance regardless of the cost and the pain. To do this requires determination and commitment. God wants us to approach our spiritual walk in the same way and with the same goal. We fall short spiritually because we forget that it requires wholehearted consistency and persistence to go the distance.

SPIRITUAL SHORTCOMINGS (2 KINGS 13:4-6)

In the northern kingdom of Israel, Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, was the new king. He continued in the sins of Jeroboam I who had established illegitimate worship sites with golden calves at Dan

and Bethel. Israel had a problem with divided loyalties. They were God's chosen people, but they did not worship Him alone. Because of this, "The Lord's anger burned against Israel."

God's anger is not an explosive response like human temper. It is a measured righteous judgment against sin. The deeper Israel went in sin, the more severely God chastised them. Israel suffered continued defeat at the hand of Hazael of Aram until his troops overran Israel. But God's punishment is redemptive, and Jehoahaz finally sought the Lord's favor. Everything about God's gracious nature is revealed in four little words, "the Lord heard him." The Lord of mercy and compassion, instead of giving them what they deserved, sent an unnamed deliverer for



Carraway

Israel. Even though they knew that God had delivered them from Aram, Israel still did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, and the Asherah pole, used for Baal worship, remained in Samaria.

When God answers our prayers in distress, do we breathe a sigh of relief and go right back to the very way of life that caused the problem in the first place? Believers who experience God's blessings through answered prayer should serve Him with all their hearts and with changed lives.

PERSISTENT SERVICE (2 KINGS 13:14-17)

Many years had passed since Elisha had Jehu anointed king. Now terminally ill, he continued to be faithful to his task—calling Israel back to Yahweh and stemming the tide of apostasy. Jehoahaz, son of Jehoahaz, was now king. Like his father, he failed to rid the land of idolatry. With his kingdom still under the oppression of the Arameans, he also

sought help from the Lord.

Jehoahaz went to see the ailing prophet. Addressing him as "my father" indicated the respect he felt for him and reflected his grief. Just as Elisha had done earlier with Elijah, the king described Elisha as "the chariots and horsemen of Israel." He had been the true strength and protective influence of Israel. Though he was old and dying, Elisha did not desert his responsibility as the Lord's prophet. Using symbolism rather than words, he instructed the king to get a bow and arrows. Elisha put his own hands on Jehoahaz's hands to symbolize that the power the king would exert came from the Lord through his prophet. Jehoahaz would fight the battle, but God would control the outcome.

Then Elisha directed Jehoahaz to shoot the arrow through the east window toward Aram. Elisha proclaimed a full victory over the Arameans at Aphek. Even seriously ill, Elisha continued to serve God. Regardless of the condition believers are in or the degree of suffering we experience, we should continue to serve God as we are able.

LIMITED SUCCESS (2 KINGS 13:18-19, 24-25)

"Until you have put an end to them" (vs. 17) expressed God's desire to have Aram's hold on Israel broken completely. Directed by Elisha to strike the ground with the remaining arrows, Jehoahaz showed less than enthusiastic acceptance of God's promise. His striking the ground only three times indicated half-hearted obedience.

Elisha's anger at Jehoahaz was neither petty nor unfair. The king failed to trust God to give him as many victories as he had arrows. Perhaps Jehoahaz could not believe that God would do as much for him as Elisha implied. Limited obedience brought limited victory. God would have allowed the king victories resulting in Aram's complete destruction. As it was, he was allowed only three victories.

God gives us as much as we have faith to grasp. We, not God, limit ourselves to moderate effectiveness instead of accomplishing all that God would have us do. Maybe we need to count our arrows.

Carraway is member of First Church, Wiggins.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph

attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and

white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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MARRIAGE AND "MEMORIES"

BY DR. JIMMY PORTER

In the mid 1950's the song "Memories Are Made of This" became quite popular. The last two verses are "Then add the wedding bells, One house where lovers dwell, Three little kids for the flavor, Stir carefully through the days, See how the flavor stays, These are the dreams you'll savor. With His blessing from above, Serve it generously with love, One man, one wife, One love throughout life. Memories are made of this, Memories are made of this."

The fact is that America is on the brink of making marriage defined as one man, one woman a memory. It appears America has a chronic case of apathy according to a recent study released by "The Barna Group."

A recent sampling of 1,618 adults revealed that 37% of voting-age citizens have never heard of the Federal Marriage Amendment which defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

When the amendment was explained to them, 46% favored the amendment while 44% opposed it and the remaining 10% had no opinion. The survey revealed that the adults who most likely will vote in November favored the amendment by a comfortable margin, 52% to 43%. The question is will the margin be enough to persuade two-thirds of the members in each house of the congress to pass the proposal and then to generate passage in three-fourths of the states (www.barna.org).

George Barna suggested that many born again Christians are not convinced that this definition of mar-

riage needs to be added to the Constitution. "This issue is reminiscent of the battle over abortion" Barna continued. "Millions of adults say they would never get an abortion, they would not want their children to have an abortion, and they believe that abortion is morally wrong — but that the decision ought to be left up to each individual as to what is right or wrong for them. In the same manner, millions of people now indicate that they are not gay

and may even claim to be repulsed by homosexuality, yet they contend that marriage and lifestyle choices such as homosexual marriage should be left in the hands of each individual. This is classic relativism — a philosophy that has taken the nation by storm in the last quarter century and is now restructuring every aspect of American society. The consequence is that many people are personally opposed to such behavior but feel compelled to allow that behavior to take place legally because they do con-

no direction and no restraints. Relativism was alive and well then, even as it is now, but

remember, God didn't approve of it then nor does He now. The consequences were not pleasant for Israel nor will they be for America. God was sovereign then even as He is now, and as the apostle Paul said, the day will come when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord of all.

You and I have watched the Supreme Court and other unelected federal judges "legislate" God out of our lives and our society. Our courts and our legislatures are often opened with prayer and we say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag quoting the phrase "One nation under God." "In God we trust" is our national motto and it is stamped on our coins. We get emotionally charged when we hear thundering renditions of "God Bless the U.S.A." Our President closes his remarks to the public with "May God bless America." It seems that it is all for show and that God has become a nonentity in both our public and private lives.

We must not cast the cloak of guilt and shame at the feet of our congressional members and judges only. Eighty-five percent of Americans self-identify as Christian, and sixty-nine percent believe God is the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect creator of the universe who rules the world today, but that is not consistent with their

moral choices. Our actions indicate God is no longer the ruler and Lord of our lives. We have removed Him from His throne and we have inserted ourselves as the CEOs of our lives. Then we do

What is next? Pedophilia, incestual relationships, polygamy, and other types of perversion are pounding at the door waiting for their turn to come in with the blessings of the American people and its judiciary. Speaking against homosexuality and sexual perversions will be criminalized as it is in Canada. The Bible will be seen as a "hate book" instead of the "good book" with news of eternal life.

I Samuel 2:30 warns "Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained." It is not too late to turn things around. Over one million petitions collected from Americans nationwide calling on Congress to pass the Federal Marriage Amendment should be in Washington by now. Hopefully, the telephone lines are ablaze with calls seeking support for this marriage amendment. Have you done your part yet? If not, do it today! The Capitol Hill switchboard number is (202) 224-3121 or (202) 225-3121. E-mail addresses can be found at www.senate.gov and www.house.gov.

America is dangerously close to making "One man, one wife, one love throughout life..." just a memory. "All a man's ways seem right to him, but the Lord weighs the heart" (Proverbs 21:2, NIV). You and I have the power to make a difference. Do we have the heart for it?



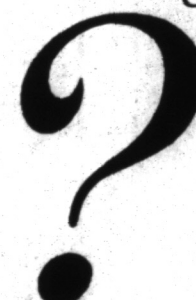
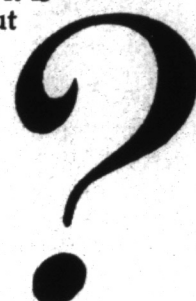
Porter



tend that there are no moral absolutes" (ibid).

Judges 17:6 says, "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (KJV). No king in Israel meant

no direction and no restraints. Relativism was alive and well then, even as it is now, but remember, God didn't approve of it then nor does He now. The consequences were not pleasant for Israel nor will they be for America. God was sovereign then even as He is now, and as the apostle Paul said, the day will come when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord of all.



what we feel is right in our own eyes because we answer to ourselves and not to Him and His word.

Religion in America has played a significant role in our moral decline. Have we sung "God is so good" so many times that we have forgotten that He hates sin and will deal harshly with it? Yes, "we are a part of the family of God," but there is a certain type of behavior he expects from those of us who claim to be His family. Have we not trivialized God? Is He a good-luck charm to whom we run when we find ourselves or our country in a crisis?

Unless America wakes up and stops the attack on the family, more grief lies ahead.

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WCC students, faculty perform in Africa

By Jeanna Graves
Correspondent

Tim Matheny and Shannon Robert of the William Carey College (WCC) theatre department and a group of five other faculty members and alumni recently returned from a 14-day trip to Nairobi, Kenya, where

positive," said Keever. "Some of them were actually familiar with the style of music."

Set in a rural North Carolina church in 1938, *Smoke on the Mountain* is a musical comedy about a traveling family of singers who arrive late to their performance due to an accident at the local pickle plant. The show incorporates bluegrass, Gospel, and country music.

"We have got good reactions from the show and lots of laughs," said Hurst. "The show really presents the Gospel through comedy."

The team worked with John and Amy McKelvey, Southern Baptist missionaries in Kenya, who serve as directors of Brackenhurst. Amy completed her master's degree in education at Carey in 2001. She is the sister of Cheryl Maqueda, WCC instructor of Spanish. Hurst is Amy and Cheryl's sister and is employed at Brackenhurst with sister Amy.

"International missions are very important," said Matheny. "I have done a number of mission projects with the support of the North American Mission Board and the lessons I learned from those trips are invaluable."

"I don't want to diminish the amazing and important work being done in the United States, but I believe that it is important for believers in America to experience the work being done around the world. The Great Commission calls us to share the good news with 'all the nations.'"

WCC is a four-year liberal arts institution based in Hattiesburg, affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention and supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

During the visit to Kenya, the WCC group visited a working tea plantation, joined a safari, and visited orphanages including one designated for children with AIDS/HIV or orphans of parents who died of AIDS. The Carey volunteers spent time with the children and delivered toys and hygiene products collected before they left Mississippi.

"I was very impressed by the people," said Keever. "The average person is very poor, but well informed. Most are trilingual with a good understanding of world politics. Kenya is a very beautiful country. Wealth and poverty are superimposed and inseparable. My favorite experience was seeing a baptism by a local Kenyan congregation at a pond just below the Brackenhurst Center."

"The work we did in the orphanages was my favorite part of the trip," said Matheny. "It is a bittersweet moment to play with those children. One little boy was so much fun. He played with several of the guys and finally latched onto me. The two of us played for most of the time I was there and occasionally he would say 'baba.'"

Thinking the child was asking for a baby bottle, Matheny asked one of the workers what the child was saying. "She said that he was calling me father," said Matheny. "It broke my heart that this little boy was starving for some male figure to call his own."

This mission trip came out of a "seed planting" trip to Kenya in the summer of 2002 by Robert, Matheny, Stewart, and other Carey students. During the 2002 trip, Carey faculty and students performed a 9/11 memorial program which included dance, song, readings, and a Broadway style performance.

Based on the popularity of those performances, the Brackenhurst staff asked the Carey people to return with a musical. "We were asked to come back this Christmas to do another show," said Matheny. "We would like to make this an on going relationship with Brackenhurst. When we go to do a good work in the name of our Lord, we also are moved and affected."

"Our God will not be silent to an open heart that simply says, 'Here I am, send me.'"

Graves is WCC administrative assistant for communications and public relations.



IN AFRICA — William Carey College (WCC) mission volunteers (front row left to right) Chris Lovely, James Stewart, Tim Matheny, Sara Kennedy, Michael Roderick, Shannon Robert, and Howard Keever pose with Brackenhurst Baptist Center employee and WCC alumna Alyssa Hurst and several Massai warriors who serve the Kenyan center as security guards. (BR special photo by Tim Matheny)

they shared Southern culture, humor, and the Gospel with British, African, and Indian people who visited the Brackenhurst Baptist Center there.

Participants from Carey included Matheny, chair of the department of theatre and communication; Robert, associate professor of theatre and technical director; Howard Keever, professor of music; Chris Lovely, a 2002 graduate in church music; Michael Roderick, a 2003 graduate in piano performance; Alyssa Hurst, a 1998 graduate in religion; James Stewart, a 2004 graduate in theatre; and Sara Keever, a WCC English student.

The seven WCC mission volunteers performed the musical comedy, *Smoke on the Mountain*. "The audience response was very

Crossover Indianapolis nets over 1,900 decisions

INDIANAPOLIS (BP) — A year of planning and praying by Indiana Southern Baptists combined with volunteer support from across the country resulted in 1,932 professions of faith during Crossover Indiana, an evangelistic blitz accompanying the mid-June Southern

Baptist Convention annual meeting in Indianapolis.

John Rogers, director of evangelism and prayer with the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, said the professions of faith were recorded through revival crusades, evangelistic block parties, prayerwalking,

street evangelism, door-to-door spiritual opinion surveys and other initiatives.

"Only heaven will reveal how many more will get saved out of these new Christians have to see their family and friends come to Christ," Rogers said.

More than 120 of Indiana's 430 Southern Baptist churches and missions participated in the Crossover effort, which included 70 evangelistic block parties and 97 weekend revivals statewide. And nearly 1,000 volunteers — about half from out of state — joined the Crossover outreach conducted largely on June 12.

Rogers said 80 professions of faith were recorded during the weekend revivals held across the state before and following the SBC annual meeting. About 50 Florida pastors and evangelists led the revivals as part of the Florida Baptist Convention's ongoing partnership with Indiana Baptists.

Jon Beck, pastor of Bethel Church, located about an hour south of Indianapolis in North Vernon, said the Crossover efforts have brought a renewed

sense of purpose to his congregation of nearly 300 people — the only SBC church in a county of 20,000 residents.

About 20 people from Beck's church volunteered at two inner-city block parties in Indianapolis on June 12. Since then, Beck has baptized about 20 new Christians at Bethel Church.

"[Crossover] was the first time some people in our church had done ministry outside the four walls of our church outside our community," the pastor said.

Rogers said he is hopeful that ongoing follow-up efforts by Indiana churches with prospects and new believers will result in record baptisms for the state in 2004-05. "Some plant, some water, but it's God who gives the increase," he said.

An estimated 70% of Indiana's 6.2 million people don't profess to be Christians while Southern Baptists across the state number nearly 100,000.

Rogers said a number of ethnic churches were bolstered by the Crossover outreach. At a block party and revival crusade in a Hispanic neighborhood in Seymour, for example, 75 professions of faith were recorded.

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